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The
**Community and Settlement Work
of**
***The LATIN-AMERICAN
INSTITUTE***

WEST TAMPA

FLORIDA



CHURCH, SCHOOL AND HOME

An Evangelizing and Americanizing Mission
of the Congregational Churches

American Missionary Association

287 Fourth Avenue

New York City

Eastern District: 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Western District: 19 South La Salle Street, Chicago, Ill.

Pacific District: 21 Brenham Place, San Francisco, Cal.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE.

Location

On the West Coast of Florida lies the commercial and winter resort city of Tampa, the second of the state in size. With suburbs it has a Spanish-speaking population above 18,000; Cubans who have come to work in the numerous cigar factories, chiefly in West Tampa. Verily a Little Cuba in atmosphere.

History

In 1905 Rev. Fred P. Ensminger, who had made a close study of Catholic populations, came with his wife to West Tampa to minister to the un-shepherded Cubans. An American church was organized as a nucleus. A school and training homes for children were undertaken and carried as a personal enterprise for some time. Aided by the Florida women, and later by the Congregational Education Society; in 1916 transferred to the American Missionary Association.

Scope

A private school, supported in part by tuitions, and more largely by Florida Congregational women is continued. It serves as an entering wedge for religious work, as the children must also attend Sunday School.

A community work, consisting of sewing and cooking classes, gardening enterprises, children's clubs, evening classes in English, entertainments and playground direction. The Institute ministers to the poor; champions the cause of the Cuban who, like all immigrants ignorant of English language and American customs and laws, is sometimes oppressed by employers and officials. There is a constant ministry of social justice in his behalf.

An American church, started in 1905, actively co-operating; a Cuban church, aided by the Congregational Home Missionary Society, focusing the entire enterprise. The Church Building Society has aided in church and parsonage building.

Workers

Rev. Otto J. Scheibe, Superintendent and pastor of Cuban church, two teachers and two settlement workers, ably supplemented by the volunteer service of the pastor's wife and three children.

Statistics

School, 180; Christian Endeavor Society, 60; Church members, 100.

Day school enrolls 104;

evening classes, 12; Sunday

members, 100.

Plant

A group of seven buildings, consisting of the church, school building, two parsonages and three buildings occupied by the social activities.

THE CUBAN IN AMERICA.

The Cuban is in a way the leader in Latin America. Argentina shines in Spanish South America, Cuba in Central America and the Antilles. One has only to look at photographs to see Indian types in New Mexico, negroid types in Porto Rico in contrast with Spanish types in West Tampa. I do not know the Porto Rican or the Mexican at first hand, but in comparison with him, I venture to assert that the Cuban of Tampa, Key West and Havana is sophisticated. The Cuban is doubtless entitled to his characterization as the Frenchman of the New World. Provincial and superficial in many ways—not yet intellectually free from Spain—he is nevertheless cosmopolitan.

The restive quickness of the Cuban is worth study. The Indian population of Cuba was early eliminated as a factor. The fertile island was a geographical and political center for the settlement of the young blood of Spain. These "peninsulars" from Spain longest of all held their allegiance to the mother country, and welcomed more brothers from across seas when other colonies had become republics. Then they became "insulars," or Cubans. On account of the short time since their revolt, they are yet in a revolutionary frame of mind. This spirit has a large bearing on conditions in larger Tampa.

In addition, another feature pointing to intractability in social work is the deep cleft between the Latin and Saxon cultures. Tampa is yet a frontier Saxon city; industrially progressive, socially backward. The Cubans are chiefly workers from Havana who know little of American culture, and have their chief contact with commercial Americans. The orthodox Tampa business doctrine is that the Cuban factory operative does not have any money after Monday morning or night. The pleasure-loving disposition makes exploitation easy. The separation of the cultures is seen in the fact that some Cubans who have been in Tampa twenty years have learned little English. There is sufficient ebb and flow of migration to keep the colony in touch with Cuban and Latin American thought.

In this situation the Institute was organized chiefly for the purpose of introducing evangelical Christianity, with its novel intellectual attitude, to nourish Christian character, and to help community institutions and causes.

Rev. FREDERICK P. ENSMINGER.

GLIMPSES OF THE WORK.

The Cubans are very fond of rich food; it costs an ordinary family three times as much to live as an American family. Many a family daily consumes one pound of lard, five quarts of milk, a dozen eggs for breakfast, besides meat, potatoes, beans, rice and all other trimmings. The great surprise in our classes is to find that simple, yet good and tasty food can be prepared at a much less cost; that cake can be made with one or two eggs and many good things without eggs, when they use eight or ten eggs for an ordinary cake. Our aim in the cooking class is to teach the value of foods, and to make the simple dish—the kind of food they should eat.

We aim to teach the practical things in sewing also, because these girls so soon go into the cigar factories to work and their opportunity for dress-making is limited. So we are helping them to improve their time now before their lives of drudgery begin.

Look also at our boys in the school garden. Each boy has a garden at home. Here he learns, and at home he puts into practice his training. From our seed beds we furnish him with plants, which he sets out and cares for in his own little garden. In this department our beginnings are small, but even that is a gain, when you realize how ignorant they are in this line, and the little interest they take. It is true they never had an opportunity, most of them coming from the city of Havana, where they lived in flats, and had no chance to plant anything, but here they all have room for nice vegetable gardens. This art once learned will give employment to the boy and keep him off the street; above all, it will furnish the kind of exercise in the open air which the cigar maker sadly needs.

Rev. OTTO J. SCHEIBE.



THE WORK FOR WOMEN.

The latest development in our work here at the Latin American Institute is a women's club or auxiliary. We have a Federated Woman's Club here in West Tampa and tried to get our women to attend that; but few of them speak English (only one woman of our membership) while some could not dress well enough to feel at home among the usually well dressed club women, so I hold a membership and attend the meetings to get the benefit of the suggestions and the State literature on Home Economics.

Our monthly meetings are held here at the parsonage; we meet in the evening to accommodate those who work in the factories or whose duties prevent their going out until the older children are home from school. Those who have no one to leave the little ones with are invited to bring them, and daughter Miriam plays the role of nurse in the dining room. It is quite an unusual thing for women to go out unattended in the evening.

After the regular business is attended to we have music and even games, such as carems and parcheesi, until the minds are relieved of the daily care and responsibilities. I wish you could see how they enter into the spirit of these games, and hear them laugh.

We then have an hour or so in the study of home economics. Last month I taught them to piece quilt blocks. Imagine anything so old to us as being new to them. The President came to the meeting last evening with blocks enough for half her quilt, ready made. The Secretary had learned to tat, so she gave a lesson in that art. Then all went to the kitchen for our cooking lesson. Our bakers were on a strike recently so the women were impressed with the necessity of knowing how to bake bread in case of emergency. Some one had eaten some of my biscuits and suggested that I teach them to bake biscuits. We do not have a membership fee, but each one brings five cents to pay for the materials used; then takes a sample home for the family to taste.

Mrs. OTTO J. SCHEIBE.

THE WORK FOR CHILDREN.

The Cubans are a very attractive people—the darkest ones sometimes the prettiest we think. They have nice complexions, pretty eyes and hair, are very clean and affectionate.

Each afternoon I relieve the Primary teacher of the young children, who are too young for school work but who must come or keep the older children home to care for them while the parents are working in the factories. They troop just next door from the school to the Parish House—another teacher and I have rooms in a wing—and we have games, songs, rhythms and occupation work—my training for kindergarten work enables me to do something with the few materials I have and they are responding and the parents are much pleased. It would do your heart good to hear the little tots and the older ones sing so wholeheartedly.

Every day almost I have some children on the playground, teaching them to play—they're a real problem, talk so loud and have strong likes and dislikes; but I feel encouraged, as they really are getting a little of the co-operative spirit—at least some days—but so many different moods! What they are one day gives one no clue for next time.

At one big Festa in the Parish House, we had 95 children in one room, playing games—you can imagine perhaps the state of our throats trying to talk above them.

By a Young Settlement Worker.

